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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [SOCI](#) [CASC](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIA: SOP FOR QUESTIONING FEMALE CRIMINALS

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

RULES FOR QUESTIONING WOMEN SUSPECTED OR ACCUSED OF A CRIME

11. (C) A contact of AmConGen Jeddah reported that Saudi authorities utilize a unique and explicit set of procedures when questioning women who are suspected or accused of a crime in the Kingdom. According to the source, a woman must be accompanied by a "Mahram", or male guardian, throughout the entire investigative process. If the issue at hand is confidential, the Mahram must be put in an adjacent room with

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a window through which he can continue watching the woman. If no Mahram is available, a Sheikh and a member of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (Mutawah) must attend in his place. Secondly, only investigators known for their "good manners and honesty" should handle criminal cases involving women. When these investigators speak with the female suspects, they should use only direct and straightforward questions.

12. (C) The Consulate's source also reported that when standard police operating procedures call for a physical search of a detainee, two women "known for their honesty" must perform the search on a female suspect and only in the presence of her Mahram. When it is necessary to "smell" the woman for alcohol-related offenses, two female doctors or nurses must be involved and, again, only in the presence of the female detainee's Mahram. Finally, the Consulate contact stated that a woman who is being taken out of jail for questioning must be accompanied by her Mahram or two "dependable" women. NOTE. This source did not indicate how strictly this standard operating procedure is followed. END

NOTE.

Gfoeller